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Viewing cable 09NICOSIA104, MONCHEGORSK: CYPRIOTS BEGINNING TO SQUIRM

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Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

To understand the justification used for the classification of each cable, please use this [WikiSource](#) article as reference.

Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#09NICOSIA104**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
09NICOSIA104	2009-02-05 15:19	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	Embassy Nicosia

Appears in these articles:

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C O N F I D E N T I A L NICOSIA 000104

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR EUR, IO, NEA, ISN, L

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/04/2019

TAGS: [PARM](#) [MNUC](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [SY](#) [IR](#) [CY](#)
SUBJECT: MONCHEGORSK: CYPRIOTS BEGINNING TO SQUIRM

REF: NICOSIA 98 AND OTHERS

Classified By: Ambassador Frank C. Urbancic, Reasons 1.4 (b), (d)

11. (U) This message contains an action request; please see Paragraph 7.

12. (C) Status of Ship: No changes since last report -- M/V Monchegorsk remains at anchorage in Limassol harbor, under maritime police observation. Conversations with Palace officials hint at discord between the RoC, ship's master and crew, and ship's owners, mainly over financial costs of remaining in Cyprus and/or transit to a third-country (i.e., not Syrian) port (Para 6).

13. (C) Diplomatic Activity: The Ambassador at 0900 hrs local (0200 DC) February 5 contacted Presidential Palace Diplomatic Coordinator Leonidas Pantelides. The United States regretted the RoC decision to send its unhelpful letter to the Iran Sanctions Committee (ISC), he began. Now that the conversations had shifted to New York, however, the critical issue on-island was to ensure the Monchegorsk did not escape RoC control. Pantelides assured that Cyprus would not allow the ship to depart. He repeated that the government sought UN cover for its actions and wanted to get the Monchegorsk and its cargo out of Cyprus, but only by putting it "in possession of the UN." The RoC had been in regular contact with Moscow on the matter, and was convinced the Russians would support its tack in New York.

14. (C) Pantelides called back at 1300 hrs, a touch frazzled and with a completely different message. "We want to find a way through this mess," the Cypriot diplomat insisted, admitting the government unlikely would receive the response it had sought via its letter to the ISC. Now Cyprus wanted to explore a third-country transfer option, which until this conversation, it had dismissed out-of-hand.

15. (C) "Unofficially" and without committing his government, Pantelides asked if Malta represented an acceptable venue to receive the goods. France and Italy had been too "high profile" for a third-party transfer, he explained. Neighboring Malta, however, was tiny, and RoC President Demetris Christofias would be comfortable dealing with the Maltese. Pantelides wanted to hear U.S. views on the proposal before fleshing it out further, and presented Ambassador a broad outline. Cyprus's thinking entailed ordering the ship and cargo to Malta, where the containers would be off-loaded. The Monchegorsk would depart, and the Maltese would take appropriate action in accordance with UNSCRs 1747 and 1803. Pantelides did not reveal, however, whether he had floated this proposal with Valletta, London or Paris.

16. (C) The only local impediment Pantelides saw was a possible demand from Monchegorsk's owners, crew or master for the RoC to cover transit costs and fees. He and the Ambassador eventually agreed, however, that those figures did not appear exorbitant for Cyprus, and that alone should not derail this options, if it were found otherwise to be workable. Ambassador committed to report the RoC approach back to Washington and later share the USG response, whatever it might be.

17. (C) Comment and Action Request: Without its desperately-sought "UN cover," we believe that Cyprus will continue to resist with all means available the off-loading of the Monchegorsk in Limassol. We also understand, however, that the EU is turning up the heat on the RoC to take action in line with EU Common Positions. Success in Brussels would be the best outcome to the Monchegorsk affair. Short of that, we request instructions from Washington on whether to encourage the RoC to pursue its Malta proposal (we will continue to track and report it regardless). If this option is determined to be workable, it will be imperative to have

sufficient assets in place to ensure the ship does not break and run, as well as assurances from Valletta that it is willing and capable to accept the illegal cargo.
Urbancic